

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07
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FM AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1471
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL NICE

UNCLAS MARSEILLE 0032

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, FR
SUBJECT: VISIT OF MITTERAND TO MQRSEILLE JANUARY 24.

1. SUMMARY

SOCIALIST LEADER FRANCOIS MITTERAND PAID A CAMPAIGN VISIT TO MARSEILLE ON JANUARY 24, A SCANT THREE DAYS AFTER THAT OF GEORGES MARCHAIS. HIS DAY BEGAN WITH A DEDICATION TO LEON BLUM OF A SMALLISH, NEWLY RENOVATED DOWNTOWN PLAZA FOLLOWED BY AN AFTERNOON PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE MAIRIE HOSTED BY GASTON DEFFERRE AND CONCLUDING WITH AN EVENING ADDRESS TO INVITED LOCAL SOCIALIST LEADERS AND WORKERS. THOUGH WELL ATTENDED, THE EVENTS WERE SOMEWHAT LACKING IN SPONTANEITY AND VITALITY. COPIES OF PRESS REPORTS ABOUT THE VISIT WILL BE POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY PARIS.

2. THE PRESS CONFERENCE

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MOST OF THE QUESTIONING BY THE PRESS CONCERNED PS-PC RELATIONS THOUGH MITTERAND WAS NOT DIRECTLY CRITICAL OF THE PC HE WAS NOT FLATTERING, AND HIS REMARKS REVEALED A GO IT ALONE APPROACH BY HIS PARTY TO THE PROGRAM COMMUN AND TO THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS. HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE PS WOULD COME AWAY FROM THE ELECTIONS AS THE MAJORITY PARTY IN THE COUNTRY IN SPITE OF THE ANY EFFECTS FROM THE WORKING

ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT AND THE PC WHICH, IN HIS RECENT SPEECH AT RENNES, HE CHARGED HAD BEEN MADE IN AN EFFORT TO REDUCE THE GROWING SOCIALIST SUCCESS. SHOULD THE PS AND THE PC FIND THEMSELVES PARTNERS IN A GIVERNMENT, HE SAID THAT PC MINISTERS WOULD MOST LIKELY FOLLOW THEIR PARTY S PARTISAN OBJECTIVES RATHER THAN THOSE JOINTLY AGREED ON BY THE TWO PARTNERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, A PS GOVERNMENT WOULD CLOSELY FOLLOW THE TRUE PRINCIPLES OF THE LEFT. HE CHARACTERIZED THE PC AS IN FACT BEING MORE INTERESTED IN COOPERATING WITH THE RIGHT THAN WITH THE LEFT AND SAID AT NO TIME IN EUROPE HAS A COMMUNIST PARTY JOINED WITH A SOCIALIST PARTNER TO GOVERN. RATHER, COOPERATION HAS BEEN WITH THE RIGHT, AS IN ITALY. THE PC WAS DESCRIBED AS HAVING LOST INTEREST IN THE PROGRAMME COMMUN BECAUSE IT HAS SLIPPED TO A MINORITY POSITION IN THE PS-PC RELATIONSHIP.

AS FOR COOPERATING WITH THE RIGHT SHOULD IT WIN THE ELECTION, THE SOCIALIST LEADER EMPHATICALLY STATED THAT HIS PARTY WOULD REFUSE TO JOIN IN COALITION. MITTERAND TERMED AS FAILURES THE GOVERNMENT S ECONOMIC MEASURES, AND WENT ON TO SAY THAT HIS PARTY S PLANS FOR ECONOMIC IMPROVMENT WOULD RESULT IN CORRECTING CURRENT DIFFICULTIES SOME 18 MONTHS AFTER IMPLEMENTATION. THE MOST RECENT GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC PROGRAM, UNVEILED RECENTLY BY BARRE AT BLOIS, IS MERELY A THIRD AND TIRED REPETITION OF THE ORIGINAL PLAN BARRE , WHICH HAS FAILED.

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3. EVENING PROGRAM

SOME THREE THOUSAND PS WORKERS AND SUPPORTERS ATTENDED THE EVENING PROGRAM BY INVITATION COMPARED WITH THE APPROXIMATELY 40,000 WHO WERE AT MARCHAIS S PUBLIC PROGRAM ON SATURDAY. IN A TEN MINUTE PRELIMINARY TALK, MAIRE DEFFERRE LAUDED THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND ITS EFFORTS IN THE BOUCHES-DU-RHONE AND INTRODUCED THE PARTY S DEPARTEMENTAL ELECTION CANDIDATES AND THEIR SUPPLEANTS.

4. SPEAKING FOR ONE HOUR IN FINE ORATORICAL STYLE, WITHOUT A TEXT, MITTERAND SOUGHT TO SPUR PARTY LOYALTY AND HARDER WORK FOR A SOCIALIST VICTORY IN MARCH. HE LAID THE BLAME FOR FRANCE S ILLS DIRECTLY ON THE MAJORITE GOVERNMENT WHICH HE TERMED AS HAVING PROMISED CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT FOR TWENTY YEARS BUT HAD BEEN INCAPABLE OF PRODUCING IT. THE SOCIALIST PROGRAM HOWEVER WOULD PRODUCE THE CHANGE THE PEOPLE WANTED. THE PARTY IS CAPABLE OF IMPLEMENTING ITS PROGRAM WITH SUCCESS, THEREBY BRINGING FRANCE INTO A NEW ERA. PROBLEMS CURRENTLY BESETTING THE YOUNG, THE AGED AND THOSE AT THE MINIMUM WAGE LEVEL WOULD GET SPECIAL ATTENTION.

SPECIFICALLY, HE WOULD RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE TO FF 2,400 MONTHLY, CHANGE THE RETIREMENT AGE FOR MEN AND WOMEN TO AGE SIXTY AND AGE SIXTY FIVE RESPECTIVELY, THERE WOULD BE A NEW FIFTH WEEK OF ANNUAL VACATION, AND AN INCREASE IN THE FAMILY ALLOTMENT. MITTERAND CALLED FOR A JOINT POLITICAL EFFORT BY ALL ELEMENTS OF THE LEFT, SAYING THAT THIS WAS NECESSARY TO UNSEAT THE MAJORITE GOVERNMENT. HE CITED THE LEFT S GROWING STRENGTH: 32 PER CENT OF VOTES IN 1965, 46 PERCENT IN 1973, 49.5 PER CENT IN 1974, 55 PER CENT TODAY. TODAY THE LEFT IS THE MAJORITE HE EMPHASIZED. HE PROMISED PS VOTER SUPPORT ON THE SECOND TOUR FOR PC CANDIDATES WHO WIN THE FIRST TOUR AND CALLED FOR SIMILAR SUPPORT TO BE GIVEN BY THE LEFT TO PS CANDIDATES IN A SIMILAR POSITION. UNCLASSIFIED

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CITING THE 15 YEAR REFUSAL BY LEON BLUM TO BRING HIS PARTY INTO A COALITION WITH THE CENTER AND RIGHT, MITTERAND MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE NEVER WOULD HAVE THE PS ACCEPT A MAJORITY BID FOR A COMPROMISE. MEIMA

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